



Linkages of Organised Crime with Terrorism

For Prelims: [United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime \(UNTOC\)](#), [United Nations Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#), [United Nations Office On Drug and Crime \(UNODC\)](#), [National Security Act, 1980](#), [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985](#).

For Mains: Differences and Similarities Between Organised Crime and Terrorism, Some Examples of Linkages Between Organised Crime and Terrorism in India, Challenges and Solutions Related to Organised Crimes, Legal Position of Organised Crime in India.

Context

The intertwining of [terrorism](#) and [organised crime](#) poses a significant hurdle for India. Throughout its history, **India has struggled with separatist uprisings, terrorism, and internal conflicts spanning various regions**. The role that terrorism has played in funding criminal activities **continues to perpetuate violence and create instability within India and neighbouring areas**. Addressing this issue requires enhancing state capabilities and coordination among numerous security agencies.

How does Organised Crime in India Work?

- **Definition:** Organised crime **varies from country to country** but generally involves illegal activities such as property offenses, [money laundering](#), [drug trafficking](#), currency violations, intimidation, prostitution, gambling, and trafficking in arms and antiquities.
 - It can **also involve participation in the legal economy through illegal competitive means like extortion**, which can have a greater economic impact than entirely illegal activities. In both cases, criminal methods are used because **organised criminal groups are made up of criminal elements**.
- **Background:** India has a long history of fighting [separatist insurgencies](#) and controlling civil conflicts that are spread across different parts of the country. **Several conditions make India particularly prone to transnational organised crime and terrorism**. These include, among others, proximity to major heroin producers and exporters, and regional drug trade through overland routes and the sea.
 - Moreover, groups willing to take risks, [pervasive poverty](#) and the protracted nature of 'low intensity' conflicts have also **created a permissible environment for the crime-terror nexus in India**.
- **Geographical Conflict Zones:** Jammu and Kashmir, along with North Eastern states like Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur, are major conflict zones in India. Additionally, **there's a [Maoist insurgency](#), known as the Naxalite threat**, in Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Terrorist Threats:** Pakistan-based terrorist groups pose a significant threat to both Jammu and Kashmir and mainland India. **Violent and religiously motivated groups within India** also contribute to the terrorist threat.

What are the Differences and Similarities Between Organised Crime and Terrorism?

| Aspect | Organized Crime | Terrorism |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Objective | Seeks financial or material benefit. | Aims to intimidate a population or government for political or social objectives. |
| Nature of Activities | Typically involves illegal businesses, fraud, drug trafficking, etc. | Involves acts of violence, hostage-taking, bombings, etc. to create fear or make a statement. |
| Commitment by Individuals | Requires organized groups, not committed by a single person. | Can be committed by a single person or organised groups. |
| Alliances and Relationships | May form alliances with terrorist groups for mutual benefit. | Alliances or connections can exist but with different motives. |
| Overlaps and Intersections | Can adopt terrorist tactics for criminal objectives. | May engage in criminal activities to fund or support terrorist operations. |

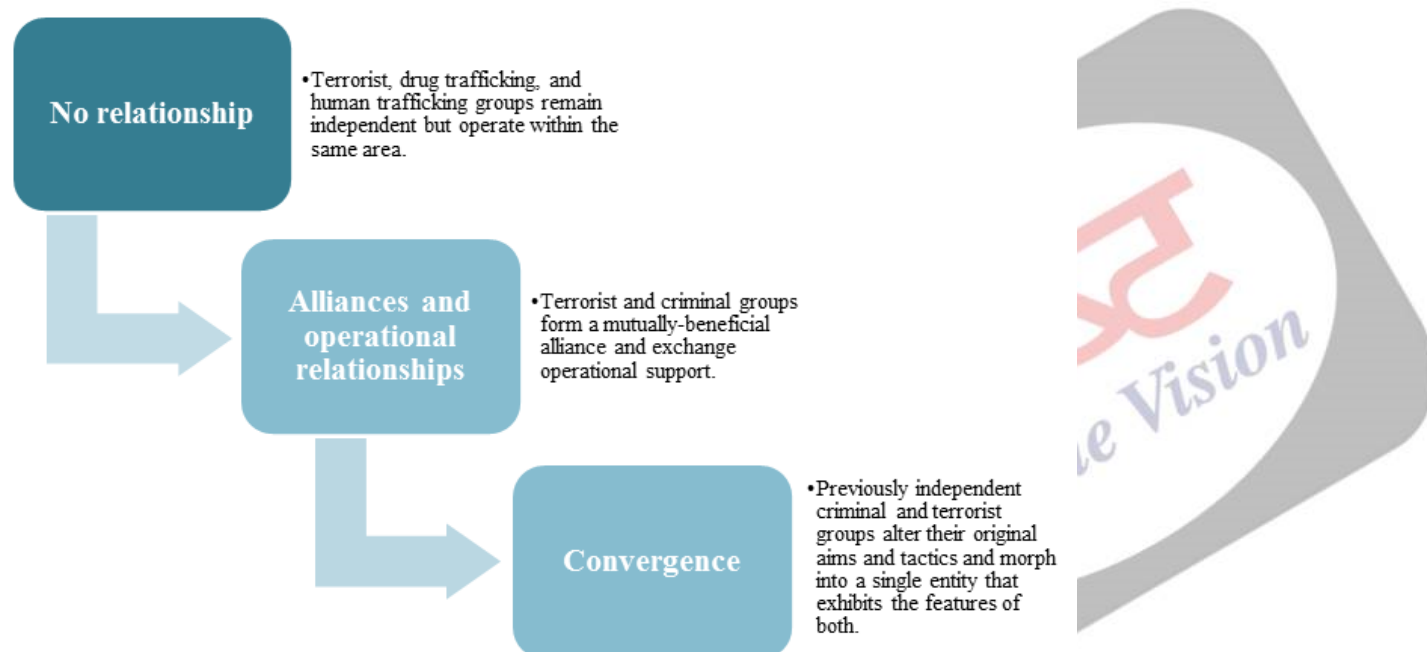


Figure: Relationship Between Organised Crime and Terrorism

What are Some Examples of Linkages Between Organised Crime and Terrorism in India?

Jammu & Kashmir

- **External Actors and Militant Groups:** Pakistan-based groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM), Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HUJI), and Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) operate from across the **Line of Control (LOC)**, engaging in militant activities within J&K. These groups are often accused of receiving funding and support from external sources.
- **Financing and Funding Sources:** Terrorist organisations in Kashmir source their funding from various channels, including local charities, donors in the **Persian Gulf**, state sponsors, handlers, and the Hawala system. The funding methods also involve money laundering, drug money, and **counterfeit currency**.
 - Hawala is an **informal funds transfer system that allows for the shifting of money from one person to another** without the actual movement of money.

Northeastern States

- **Terrorist Groups and Insurgencies:** The **United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)** and the longstanding **Naga insurgency** in Nagaland are highlighted as major insurgent groups operating

in the region. These groups have been active for years, raising concerns about security and stability.

- **Symbiotic Relationship Between Crime and Terrorism:** Poor governance in the Northeastern states has facilitated a symbiotic relationship between terrorist organizations and criminal groups. These **groups run parallel governments in certain regions and engage in illegal activities** like drug trafficking, arms smuggling, human trafficking, and money laundering to finance their operations.

Naxalites

- **Origins and Spread:** The Naxalites originated from Naxalbari in West Bengal and expanded their influence across various states, including Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. The movement **primarily consisted of landless, low-caste, and tribal individuals** who sought access to state resources, which they felt were denied to them.
- **Sources of Funding:** The movement sustained itself through various means, including extortion, running parallel governments in rural areas, **collecting taxes from rural populations, and involvement in the smuggling of small arms, homemade explosives, and landmines.**

What is the Legal Position of Organised Crime in India?

- Organised crime has always existed in India in some form or another. It has, however, assumed its virulent form in **modern times due to several socio-economic and political factors** and advances in science and technology.
 - Even though rural India is not immune from it, **it is essentially an urban phenomenon.**
- India **does not have a specific law to deal with organised crime** at the national level. The existing laws, such as the [National Security Act, 1980](#), and the [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985](#) are inadequate as they target individuals and not criminal groups or enterprises.
- Some states, such as **Gujarat** (Gujarat Control of Organised Crime Act, 2015), **Karnataka** (Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act, 2000), and **Uttar Pradesh** (Uttar Pradesh Control of Organised Crime Act, 2017), have **enacted their own laws to combat organised crime.**
- India is also a **party to several international conventions and treaties** that aim to prevent and suppress organized crime at the global level.
 - **These include:**
 - [United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime \(UNTOC\).](#)
 - [United Nations Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\).](#)
 - [United Nations Office On Drug And Crime \(UNODC\).](#)
 - **Conventions facilitate** cooperation, mutual assistance, law enforcement, and information sharing among countries.

What are the Challenges Related to Organised Crimes?

- **Social Evils:** Organised crime leads to adverse social effects such as the harmful impact of illegal drugs on health and behavior, increased violence involving firearms, fear of crime among the population, and manipulation/control of entities like labor unions. This manipulation can hike up the costs of **goods** and services.
- **Political Influence:** Organised crime groups can influence political parties, governmental structures, and local administrations. This infiltration often involves corruption of politicians and government officials, leading to a loss of public trust in the government and a breakdown of social consensus.
- **Corruption in Institutions:** There's widespread corruption within institutions like the police and armed forces due to involvement with drug traffickers. Assassinations of government officials, judges, and law enforcement officers in some countries have raised serious concerns globally.
- **Specialized Legislation and Enforcement:** There exists no centralised legislation specifically addressing organized crime in India. It's crucial to implement specialised measures to combat this threat.
- **Economic Consequences:** Organized crime infiltrates legitimate businesses, tarnishes their reputation, and corrupts officials involved in money laundering. In some instances, the profits from

organized crime are comparable to entire industries, with the illegal drug trade estimated as the world's second-largest industry by the value of goods.

- The income generated by organised crime groups can rival the gross national product of several countries.

- **Transnational Nature:** Organised crime operates across borders, making cooperation between multiple countries essential. However, differences in legal systems, jurisdictional issues, and varying priorities among nations hinder seamless collaboration in combating transnational crime.

Way Forward

- **Intelligence Fusion Centers:** Establish specialised centers where intelligence agencies, law enforcement, financial institutions, and other relevant bodies share information. These centers should focus on analyzing data to identify overlapping patterns between organised crime and terrorism, facilitating coordinated responses.
- **Financial Investigation Units:** Strengthen financial investigation units to track money laundering, illicit financing, and funding sources that support both organized crime and terrorist activities. Utilise forensic accounting and advanced analytics to follow the money trails.
- **Risk Assessment and Monitoring:** Develop risk assessment methodologies to identify high-risk sectors susceptible to criminal-terrorist infiltration. Implement continuous monitoring and audits in areas such as trade, finance, and vulnerable industries.
- **Targeted Legislation:** Enact and enforce legislation specifically designed to prosecute individuals involved in both organized crime and terrorism. This includes laws addressing dual criminality and expanding the legal framework for prosecuting those involved in both spheres.
- **Cross-Border Cooperation:** Strengthen international cooperation through joint investigations, extradition treaties, and mutual legal assistance agreements. Coordinate efforts to address cross-border criminal-terrorist activities effectively.
- **Community Policing and Engagement:** Implement community policing initiatives to build trust and gather intelligence within communities vulnerable to criminal-terrorist influences. Engage with local leaders to identify and address underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to susceptibility.
- **Disruption Strategies:** Utilise disruption strategies, such as disrupting supply chains, intercepting illicit trade routes, and dismantling logistical networks. Disrupting the infrastructure that supports criminal-terrorist activities can hinder their operations significantly.
- **Technological Solutions:** Invest in advanced technologies like **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**-based analytics, **blockchain** tracing for financial transactions, and surveillance tools to monitor and track suspicious activities online and offline.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) has a 'Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air'.
2. The UNCAC is the ever-first legally binding global anti-corruption instrument.
3. A highlight of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the inclusion of a specific chapter aimed at returning assets to their rightful owners from whom they had been taken illicitly.
4. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated by its member States to assist in the implementation of both UNCAC and UNTOC.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. Analyse the complexity and intensity of terrorism, its causes, linkages and obnoxious nexus. Also suggest measures required to be taken to eradicate the menace of terrorism. **(2021)**

Q. India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? **(2018)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/linkages-of-organised-crime-with-terrorism>

